



General Strength Training Tips

Exercise does not have to be rocket science. Keep a these simple things in mind while doing your workout and planning your exercise.

-consistency: the most important factor with exercise or anything else important in your life you want to progress or improve on. Regular, training adds up to big progress.

-work hard!: have confidence in your work out plan and give it your best effort! Know that your are making the right choices and have the focus to get in better shape! Getting strong and fit doesn't happen by accident, but it isn't rocket science either.

-warm-up first - a few minutes of some low intensity cardio, followed by a few specific mobility moves is ideal before beginning your training. The older you get and/or the earlier you workout in the day, the more important this becomes.

-speed: in general, do not rush doing exercise. Don't thrash around with the weight.

The exception would be doing specific explosive or plyometric exercises—where speed is the focus and load is lighter



-control: rather than thinking about how many seconds to raise and lower the weight--which can make exercise pretty complicated--think about control. You always want to be in control of the weight as you lift it. This means no jerking, swaying, swinging, dropping, etc. You move the weight, the weight doesn't move you. Always be able to pause (come to a brief, but complete stop) at the top of the movement. Lower the weight slower than you raised it.

-posture: simply put, try to stay as tall as possible when sitting or standing during exercise. This will ensure your abs and trunk are tight, your butt is contracted to protect your spine and you have a solid base to push or pull from.

-breathing: Just keep breathing! Don't focus too much on when to inhale or when to exhale (mostly on exertion). Coordinate your breathing with the movement you are performing. You should not sound like you are gasping! Try to rhythmically inhale and exhale at the same points as you perform your repetitions.

-progression: if you are training consistently, you should steadily be increasing weights, reps or both--preferably. This means regularly pushing yourself to get that extra repetition or to increase the weight slightly. The key to making any kinds of improvement with exercise is to regularly attempt what you cannot do--often referred to as the "overload principle." This is the stimulus for your body to adapt and become more fit, faster, more toned, more muscular, etc. Small but consistent steps add up to big improvements over time--always remember that.

-single sets: This means doing one set (a group of repetitions) per exercise. You should work to get as much out of this set as possible. Push yourself to the point where you can't perform another repetition in good form. Every time you achieve your goal repetitions--increase the weight, resistance, difficulty etc. and start over.

-multiple sets: Performing more than one set of an exercise. If doing more than one set, try to pair or group exercises together and perform them in a sequence (super setting). So if you are doing 3 sets of exercises A B C and D --the sets performed would look like this:

A B C D A B C D A B C D Rather than: A A A B B B C C C D D D

This will keep your workout moving along and leave you more strength for your exercise performance increasing your workout intensity and economy (you will be getting more work done in less time). Using this method means you don't have to wait 1-3 minutes to recover from one set of an exercise before you begin a second set of the same exercise. You move on to a different exercise movement--giving the muscles you just worked a little break while you continue on with the workout. Very cool!

-workout tempo: you do not necessarily have to micro manage your rest periods between sets--this can be especially hard to do in a gym setting where you are sharing equipment with other people. Do, however keep an eye on the clock and try to be sure your workout clocks in at the same time each session. Your weekly workout times may look something like this:

Monday = 38 min. Wednesday = 36 min. Friday = 45 minutes

Monday and Wednesday look good--what happened Friday? Maybe too much socializing, not enough sleep last night, not moving on to your exercises quickly enough, etc. Figure it out, stay focused and keep it closer to 38-40 minutes rather than 45. Try it with your workout. See how long it takes you the first couple of sessions and then keep it there.

This advice changes somewhat if you are training for maximum strength heavy weight, (longer rest periods) or muscular endurance and calorie burn (lighter weights, short rest periods)

-rest between workouts: Most young guys need at least 48 hours before training the same muscles again, gals and older guys usually need 48 - 72 hours. There are a lot of things which can impact recovery time between sessions (age, sleep, stress, improper nutrition to name a few). If you are training consistently and hard but start to drag in your workouts and stall in your progress--give yourself an extra day.

This advice changes slightly if you are splitting your workouts into multiple parts on different days.

-variety: The body thrives being on the edge of chaos. Too much of the same thing for too long and your body will cease to improve--it will learn to accommodate the stressor (i.e. your stale program you've been doing for the last 6 months.) On the flip side, too much change and your body will never have a chance to adapt to the exercise you're doing (wandering the weight room and doing something different all the time). You'll get plenty sore and tired but have little to show for it. Change your routine every 6-8 weeks. That could mean the exercises themselves, repetition range, order of the exercises, the way you perform the repetitions etc.

The more training experience you have, the more frequently you will benefit from changing your routine.

-troubleshooting: Getting stronger and improving performance is the goal--but not necessarily the reality. If you find yourself struggling with your program--check in with the list above or a member of the fitness staff.

-stretch out: most people need to work on their flexibility (especially lower body) —which is important for just about everything. Post workout stretching and a little foam rolling is a great way to cool down. Get your body into recovery mode and relax. See fitness staff if you need ideas.